

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figure 3. This sheet replaces the original sheet 3.

Attachments: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application for consideration on the merits with claims 6-8, 11 and 17 withdrawn. Favorable consideration of this application is requested.

Drawing Objections:

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) for not showing the plurality of tether elements. Original paragraph [0053] describes that there may be more than one tether element with respect to Figure 3. "The method further includes restraining tether elements 60A (one shown) at the rod portion 46A of the movable member 42A." A second tether element is now illustrated in Figure 3 as supported by the specification. Paragraph [0053] is amended to remove the parenthetical stating that only one tether element is shown.

Specification Objection:

The disclosure is objected to because cap portion 64 should be cap portion 44 in paragraph 34. The correction is made herein.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 102:

Claims 1, 4, 9, 14 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Thomas (US 6,513,835 B2). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections. In order to anticipate a claim under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), each and every element of the claim must be disclosed in the prior art reference.

Claims 1 and 18 include the clause: "wherein the movable member has a cap portion and a generally elongated rod portion extending longitudinally from an underside of said cap portion, wherein a first broad portion *extends from said cap portion forward of said underside*". Claim 14 requires "wherein the movable member has a cap portion and a rod portion extending from an underside of said cap portion, wherein a first broad portion *extends from said cap portion*"

With regard to '835, it does not teach or suggest a first broad portion extending from the cap as in claim 14; nor does the first broad portion extend from the cap forward of the underside of the cap from which the rod portion extends. In '835, if one assumes that 82 is the first broad

portion, it extends from the rod 68 and not the cap 70. With at least this limitation of claims 1, 4, 9, 14 and 18 missing from '835, there cannot be anticipation of these claims under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Consequently, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Thomas (US 6,565,114 B1). Claim 19 as clarified requires that the tether release/vent-modifying mechanism (30A) be secured directly to the air bag retainer (112); after this, the air bag retainer is attached to the module housing (18A). The tether release/vent-modifying mechanism essentially includes a moveable member 42 (piston) and walls 40 (cylinder). By contrast, '114 teaches that the moveable member assembly 20 is the piston portion and it is supported by the housing container 18 itself (Col.2, lines 34-35) i.e. the cylinder portion is integral to the housing container. The support structure 16 is attached to the housing container.

In the present invention, the entire tether release/vent-modifying mechanism is attached directly to the air bag retainer and not via an intermediate part such as the module housing. Paragraph [0046] describes the direct connection of the tether release/vent-modifying mechanism to the cushion retainer. "Notably, the cushion retainer 112 includes a tether release/vent-modifying mechanism connector portion 124. The tether release/vent-modifying mechanism 30A may be secured to the tether release/vent-modifying mechanism connector portion 124 via fasteners (not shown) that fit through connector portion openings 126 to secure flange elements (not shown) extending from the walls 40A to the connector portion 124. Other means for attaching the mechanism 30A into the connector portion 124 are also readily understandable to those skilled in the art. For instance, snap-fit tabs may extend from the mechanism 30A that are snappable into like-sized openings formed in the connector portion 124. Welding and bonding are also feasible."

Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Objections:

Claims 2, 3, 5, 10, 12, 13, 15 and 16 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base and intervening claims. Applicants appreciate the invitation to rewrite the claims, but in light of the discussion above, Applicants believe that these claims are allowable as submitted.

Conclusion:

In summary, the Applicants believe that each formal and substantive requirement has now been met. The application is now believed to be in appropriate condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Please charge any fees due to Deposit Account # 07-0960.

Respectfully submitted,

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